



The Voice Box

Seeking to Establish Knowledge and Understanding

[/www.the-voice-box.com](http://www.the-voice-box.com)

[/tvbwebmaster@btinternet.com](mailto:tvbwebmaster@btinternet.com)

FURTHER EXPERIENCES WITH

MRS HELEN DUNCAN September 1951.

After the series of materialisation séances given by Mrs. Duncan in July 1951 at the house of Mrs G. H. of Stoke, the room in which these séances took place was left as a séance room – that is, it was devoid of furniture except for a few chairs and a wardrobe in one corner, and the corner in which Mrs. Duncan had sat was kept curtained off as it was when she used it as a ‘cabinet’.

A number of us – my wife and I included met in this room each Wednesday evening as a ‘development circle’. A small table was placed in the centre of a ring of chairs, and on the table was placed a ‘trumpet’ (a cone of metal open at each end) marked with luminous paint, a tambourine, and a number of tiny bells wired together in a sort of bracelet; under the table was placed a glass bowl of water. We sat without a light, and our object was to obtain ‘direct voice’ through the trumpet. Up to date (17.9.51) we have not succeeded; the most we have obtained are slight movements of the trumpet and

of the table. Two members of the circle are trance mediums, and we frequently have this type of communication while sitting. These two, and at least two others, are able to get communications through the table by laying their hands upon it; this we also have on occasion.

Each week one of us (taking it in turn) sits in the cabinet instead of in the circle. On 29.8.51 it was my turn. I have – so far as I have discovered – no mediumistic gifts of any kind. My experience in the cabinet was that the cabinet was of vast dimensions (I had to feel the walls at my sides and the curtain in front of me to check that it was in fact little larger than required to contain the chair on which I sat); I had a momentary vision (this was of course in complete darkness) that a tall figure stood at my right hand – I saw the shoulder, the robe, and a vague head; it vanished quickly, and was succeeded at intervals by odd lights of various shapes and colours apparently flashing from all points of the compass. I also had the sensation of lightness, lack of weight; I felt that I was suspended in air rather than sitting in the chair; this also lasted only a short time. It occurred to me that the tall figure might be Albert, but I put it down to an association of ideas (it was where he had stood for Mrs Duncan); that vision, and the odd lights I put down to ‘natural causes’ – i.e., the sort of odd flashes of light that mortal eyes can always ‘see’ in the dark, probably caused by the coursing of blood behind the eyes. Towards the end of the sitting, while I was still in the cabinet, R.S.J. (sitting in the circle, and in trance) told me how I had been feeling, and said that ‘those on the other side’ had had great difficulty in impressing me at all.

On a date in August Mrs. Duncan came again for two days; my wife attended two sittings and I attended one. The routine was the same as before; a large number of spirit forms appeared – though none for

me or for my wife – and Peggy was her usual rather boisterous self. The sitting was marred (for me) by an excess of emotion on the part of a sitter whose only son (killed in the 1939/45 war) made an appearance although (as her husband told me later) he had promised at a ‘table’ sitting the previous night that he would not do so. Such a conflict of evidence between two sittings, and the appearance of the spirit form against the declared wishes of the sitter, are matters which must strengthen doubts about the absolute authenticity of one or other sitting, or at least about the reliability of human perception or understanding.

Mrs. Duncan unexpectedly arrived at the home of Mrs. G.H. on Wednesday Sept. 12th 1951, and with some reluctance (for she was a little upset) she consented to sit in our development circle. There were seven of us present, five of our regular sitters being absent for one reason or another. Mrs. Duncan (making our party eight in total) sat in the chair normally occupied by R.S.J. She was normally dressed in a light frock, shoes and stockings, etc., and her intention was rather to see how we were progressing than to ‘go under control’ herself. However, she did ask us to remove the little table and trumpet from the centre of the circle, and no sooner was the red light switched on than she went into trance and Albert spoke to us.

“Haven’t you put Mrs. Duncan in the wrong chair?” he asked with a little laugh.

This was taken to mean that we should put her in the cabinet, and having placed a chair therein (it was an ordinary wooden kitchen chair) Mrs. Duncan was lifted on to it. Albert asked us to sing a tune, and after it a number of spirit forms appeared. The first was for me, Albert saying it was my mother. I rose to meet her, and stood within a

foot of the form. I could not recognise my mother, for it is some 34 years since I saw her, and I did not see her for the last four or five years of her life. She asked me if I was happy, and a rather trivial conversation ensued – I cannot recall for certain what was said. I blamed myself later for not having wit enough to establish identity; I did not even – so far as I remember – ask her if my father were with her; nor did I have the presence of mind to ask her a question regarding my younger brother, whose present circumstances, I feel, must be a matter of deep concern to the one that bore him. I did not even think to introduce my wife to her. Well, well; the blame is mine.

To my wife came an old friend of hers and of mine, who passed over very suddenly about three years ago. In life the voice of this lady – whose name was M**** - was languid, but now it could almost be called vivacious. She said she was wonderfully happy and she went away singing a hymn tune. My wife said that the features were like those of M*****, but neither she nor I could ever remember having heard M**** sing that particular hymn. The following day my wife asked her husband what were his wife's favourite hymns, and he said they were three – and one of the three he named was the one the spirit form had sung.

At one point Albert interrupted something he was saying to remark

“Hello, are you here again?” and Peggy's voice answered. Before she appeared she gave a cry of surprise.

“Oh look,” she said, “me Mam's got a light frock on!”.

We explained to her how it came about, and she had a little conversation with us. She then began to sing “Loch Lomond” but interrupted herself halfway through and said she must go.

It was noticeable at this sitting that Albert called out most of the sitters by their Christian names – though my wife was still “the lady sitting opposite the cabinet” and I was “the gentleman sitting by the window”. It was very friendly and informal.

Two days later – on the evening of Friday September 14th – Mrs. Duncan very kindly gave our circle another sitting; this time, in addition to the medium, there were six of our circle and two members of Stoke Spiritualist Church. Albert put his head out of the cabinet, nodded to us, and said he was happy to see we were all old friends.

Among the spirit forms was a man who addressed both my wife and my self by our Christian names, although we could not positively identify him. A little later, a lady appeared for my wife.

“Is it Aunt Anne?” my wife asked, stepping forward. The spirit form shook her head, smiled and lifted her face to the light.

“Oh, I’m sorry,” said my wife, “it’s you, Mother”.

“Yes”, was the reply. (Aunt Anne and my wife’s mother were sisters having a strong likeness to one another.)

“Are you happy, Marie “ asked the spirit.

“Yes, Mother,” answered my wife.

“Are you happy too, Douglas*?” she asked, turning towards me.

“Yes, we are,” I replied from my chair.

“I want you two to be happy together,” the spirit said earnestly.

“You know, Marie, Douglas will go a long way. He doesn’t think so, but I know he will.”

“Thank-you, Mother,” said my wife. “Are you happy?”

“Oh yes, very happy,” was the reply and the spirit form sank and was gone.

A spirit form named Douglas appeared for another sitter, and while talking to her he said in an aside to me, “There are two Dougs here now aren’t there?”.

A lady who appeared for the same sitter was named in life Mrs. H. She had only just passed over and seemed a little confused. Mrs G.H. reassured her, and told her that she was now in the spirit world. The spirit form turned to her quite indignantly. “I’m not!” she asserted in a loud voice. “I’m not. I’m here talking to you.” – and the next moment she was gone.

*Douglas is another of my Christian names.

Albert then addressed another sitter and me directly. “Leslie,” he said, “and Mr T., I know you have been reading something about Mrs. Duncan. Some of the things in that book are rather silly, aren’t they?” “Some of them are, Albert,” I replied.

"If you want to read a true account of some of Mrs. Duncan's sittings," Albert went on, "you must get a book of fiction. Dr. Margaret Vivian has written a book called "Doctor Jazz". It is about" – and Albert chuckled – "an ignorant scotch woman of the labouring class, from Aberdeen, and her guide Edward. Really, of course, it is about Mrs. Duncan and me. It tells the truth.

"You have been wondering," Albert continued, "how this is done. Well, with the help of our chemists on this side I will shew you. First of all, we will see how the ectoplasm emerges from and returns to the medium – and I want you to notice how Mrs. Duncan is breathing. Stand up, Mrs. Duncan."

The curtains opened wide and revealed Mrs. Duncan standing upright and facing us; she was breathing heavily, almost stertorously; her hands hung limply at her side and her eyes were closed. From the region of her mouth appeared a white substance, like a big moustache, like a beard growing rapidly longer, then like a robe falling to the floor. There were yards and yards of the substance; it was opalescent, soft, and altogether pure and splendid to look upon. It was spread upwards, sideways and outwards, lay like a salesman exhibiting a roll of cloth; it billowed forwards, and lay like the train of a gown across the floor. And then it shrank; waves of it, so to speak, returned upon itself, and into Mrs. Duncan, until it was all gone. And all the time Mrs. Duncan's breathing continued heavy, rather quick, but even, and as far as I could see her hands and arms never moved.

The curtains closed, and Albert said, "All right, Mrs. Duncan, you can sit down now and have a good rest." To us he went on, "Now our

chemists will shew you how we produce knocks.” A short length of filmy ectoplasm – rather like a scarf- appeared from under the curtain and lay on the floor; it lifted slightly and gave three thundering knocks on the floor – knocks so loud and vigorous that we all jumped.

The ectoplasm was withdrawn, and Albert said, “And now for the form we use to move the trumpet.” The curtains opened and we saw Mrs. Duncan sitting down; about her breast played a thin band of ectoplasm turning and twisting this way and that. Three little knocks were heard, sounding as though someone lightly tapped a metal trumpet. The next demonstration, of the form of power used to move the table, was similar.

“To most of you,” Albert said, “the biggest mystery is how we build a solid form. I want the gentleman sitting next to Ivy to stand in front of the curtain.” I was that gentleman, so I did as Albert wished.

“Now we are going to send out some ectoplasm,” Albert went on, “and I want you to put your foot on it, to see that it really is a solid. You will find that it feels like sorbo rubber.” From beneath the cabinet came a length of ectoplasm, about a foot long and four inches in diameter, filmy in appearance and certainly not looking a solid.

However, I put one hand on the wall behind me (so as not to bear too heavily on what looked so flimsy) and put one foot on the ectoplasm. It felt, as Albert had predicted, exactly like putting a foot on a roll of sorbo rubber; it gave gently to the touch, but it was resilient and quite solid. And then, as I was so to speak probing it carefully, the ectoplasm rose, pushing my foot firmly and quite quickly into the air. It was impossible to resist the thrust; if I had not had one hand on the

wall I should probably have fallen. Then the ectoplasm sank and disappeared. Albert laughed.

“You know,” he said, “we could have thrown you across the room if we had wanted to.” “I haven’t the least doubt of that,” I answered, and returned to my seat.

(After the sitting Leslie, who is a big and muscular young man, sat in Mrs. Duncan’s chair and attempted with one hand and then with two to lift my foot into the air as the ectoplasm had done. His utmost force was weak in comparison.)

“Can I ask a question, Albert?” one of the sitters asked. Albert replied courteously, “Of course; anything you like”, and the sitter went on, “Why is it that when we grasp a spirit friend’s hand it is warm?”

“Why,” Albert riposted, “should you expect to find it cold? The spirit form, you know, has no heart and no lungs, but it has a pulse, and you can feel it beating. Shew your hand, Mrs. Duncan.” (Mrs. Duncan’s hand appeared through the curtain.) “There you see her hand, rather thin. And here” – Albert’s hand appeared about a foot above Mrs. Duncan’s – “is mine, a workman’s hand. A doctor came to a sitting once, and he held both these hands simultaneously. The pulses were not the same beat.

“Lastly, “ Albert continued, “here is the voice-box we use.” And high up the curtain appeared ectoplasm shaped in the form of a square box about three inches each way (so far as I could judge). “I want someone to start counting when I say ‘au revoir’, to see how long it is before Mrs. Duncan appears.” I volunteered to count. “Very well,” said Albert. “You must be careful, so as to get the exact interval of

time between my saying 'au revoir' and Mrs. Duncan coming out to you.

Well friends, it has been very pleasant to see you all again tonight, and I am most grateful for the opportunity." (We returned the thanks.) "In the hope that we shall all meet again quite soon – au revoir."

As he said "revoir" I started counting. "One -2 I began, but before that single syllable had passed my lips Mrs. Duncan with, it appeared, one stride was standing in front of me still in trance. We sat her in a chair and she quickly came round.

This was not the end of the remarkable evening. We went downstairs and over a cup of tea discussed the wonders we had seen. However one views it, wonders they were; incredible, I have no doubt, to 95% of those who may hear but have not seen. For myself, I was confirmed in my belief that there is no shred of conscious trickery in Mrs. Duncan's mediumship, on any occasion I have seen it; allegations of cheese-cloth, re-gurgitation, and the like are just laughable. As when through R.S.J.'s mediumship we receive flowers, so when through Mrs. Duncan's we see and hear and feel spirit forms, it is not trickery.

While were talking, Mrs. Duncan came downstairs and joined us. She told us of some of her experiences, and offered to shew us another type of mediumship. A blank sheet of paper was torn from a writing-pad and held for a moment by each of us in turn(except Mrs. Duncan). It was then put on a plate and burned, by the last person to hold the paper. Mrs. Duncan then rubbed the ash on her forearm, and after considerable rubbing a message appeared. Eventually all the black was rubbed away except this message, which appeared to be written with a pen and in a rather scrawly hand. Some of it was

not very clear, but eventually it was deciphered as 'dug – I wish I could take you by the hand – Les.'

This was most remarkable; a school friend of mine named Leslie Holden lost his life in an air crash in 1926, when he was 21, and has often been "given to me" by mediums since. Needless to say, Mrs. Duncan was quite unaware of this.

Later, Mrs. Duncan said she would give us a demonstration of psychometry. She asked me to write something on a piece of paper, and I wrote "WHAT SHOULD I DO ABOUT JOHN?" While I was doing this, Mrs. Duncan said, "It can be anything – a chair, or a house, or a book, or a cow – anything you like."

I inferred from this that she did not want a question, so I crossed out all except the last word "JOHN". I then put the paper in an envelope and sealed it; no-one else had seen it.

Telling us to keep up a normal conversation among ourselves, Mrs. Duncan sat down with a pencil in her hand. She wrote something down, crossed it out, appeared perplexed, asked how to spell John, then again wrote something down, crossed it out, and declared she must be wrong. I went across to her and saw what she had written, "What will I do about Jhon", crossed it all out, then written "WHAT WILL DO ABOUT JOHN" and crossed it out all except the last word.

I told her she was right, then we opened my envelope and compared the two. Looking at me, Mrs. Duncan suddenly said, "this is what I get from you," and she rapidly scribbled what could have been a pile of tyres or a Bibendum figure, and the word "TYRES". So far as I know, she had no knowledge whatever of my business affairs.

We thanked Mrs. Duncan very warmly, and went home. On arrival, my wife said she would like to try the burned paper method. My son and I held a sheet of paper, which was then burned. My wife rubbed it on her arm and a rather smudgy "John" could be read. She tried again on the other arm, and a more legible signature of "Elizabeth" was there. My son and I tried the method, but with no result at all except a very dirty arm. When my wife tried a third time nothing appeared, but a day or two later, at a friend's house, she obtained the initials of this friend and of her late father, together with the drawing of a dog's head – he was a kennel-man. Explanation?. What do YOU think?

Cecil Kennett Sept 17th 1951.

I since here about a young man
who means all the world to
me. I would not trouble he will
be all right-

~~What will it do about~~

~~John~~
John

John

JOHN

~~WHAT WILL IT DO ABOUT~~

JOHN

~~John~~
John

TYRES

The sheet of notepaper
on which Mrs. Duncan
reproduced my question
- Sept. 14th, 1951.

